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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

(Release on receipt)

SUBJECT: "Famine Fighters" ... Information from the Office of Supply, Commodity Credit Corporation, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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If you were a homemaker in Yugoslavia...you'd be living in a community that has received a terrific pounding from the air. Railroad yards...bridges ...docks...and warehouses have been badly damaged...means of communication destroyed...and food...along with other essentials...is hard to get.

In fact your whole life centers around getting a few essentials...needles, thread, and buttons to mend your clothes...leather, nails and laces to make your old shoes last a while longer...pots, pans, and other kitchen utensils... and most important of all...food.

You have managed to get some food, of course...and a few small shipments have come in from other countries...through the efforts of UNRRA...which is the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration...and you got your share. Then one day...early this spring...there was excitement in your village ...because the first large shipment of food since the war...was due to arrive.

The whole population of your town...and people from surrounding villages gathered down at the port to watch the ship dock. Then suddenly you saw a flag on the ship...and you realized that it was a Yugoslav ship that was bringing this first large supply of food.

You had never heard such enthusiasm from the people...and you joined in the general cheering. Someone even rang a church bell...maybe you cried.

At 7 o'clock the next day...workers...went down to unload the ship. They started with great zest...but their speed slackened in the afternoon...

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Because they had been underfed for so long...and because their clothing was not heavy enough to combat an icy wind. They had had no breakfast that morning.

At noon...they were given bread and corn beef...but most of them saved it for those at home. But they worked cheerfully in spite of hardships...and soon the food was ready for distribution.

It was sent to as many districts as possible...to be distributed on the basis of population. You found out that you were entitled to go to a store...present a coupon...and get a certain amount of food as your ration.

You wasted no time...as soon as possible you went to the nearest store and received about 12 pounds of white flour...2 pounds of wheat...3 ounces of conserved meat...which, by the way, was not sent by the United States, for Uncle Sam has sent no meat to UNRRA...and about one ounce of sugar. You were glad to get these rations...but you had no idea when more might come. Possibly not for several weeks.

If you could pay for it...you did. But if the war had wiped out your resources...you took the food on credit and hoped to pay for it soon.

Thus the first big shipment of food came to Yugoslavia...and its story is a fair example of how food is rationed all over Europe today. In general it is distributed on the basis of population...need...and availability. Sometimes coupons are used...but more often they are not. The villages are usually so small that everyone knows who has received food and who hasn't...so coupons aren't necessary.

Then there's the matter of paying for food. Each community works out its own plan...and often essential food is free.

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